**Note: This guide needs to be adapted so it meets the requirements of your organisation.**

**Once adapted the guide becomes a policy.**

**We strongly advise that before implementing, this policy should be approved by your Board of Trustees/Management Committee and that full implications of it are considered.**

**It is important to make your staff and volunteers aware of the policy and any procedures they are required to follow.**

**INSERT THE NAME OF CENTRE**

**INSERT VERSION NO. (V.X)**

**DATE**

Policies and Procedures Development Guide

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Appendix 1 Template policy guide

Introduction

Policies and procedures are an important tool for integrating the guidelines, rules, focus and principles of an organisation. Policies and procedures have been defined as follows:

*“A set of policies are principles, rules, and guidelines formulated or adopted by an organisation to reach its long-term goals and typically published in a booklet or other form that is widely accessible.*

*Policies and procedures are designed to influence and determine all major decisions and actions, and all activities which take place within the boundaries set by them.*

*Procedures are the specific methods employed to express policies in action in day-to-day operations of the organisation.*

*Together, policies and procedures ensure that a point of view held by the governing body of an organisation is translated into steps that result in an outcome compatible with that view.”*

Source: policies and procedures. BusinessDictionary.com. WebFinance, Inc. September 26, 2019 <http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/policies-and-procedures.html>.

Why do we need policies and procedures?

There are a range of policies and procedures that an organisation should think about having in place when managing an advice service. These may be organisational policies or service specific policy and procedure to enable delivery of an effective advice service and meet the organisations legal responsibilities. For a suggestion list of policies and procedures, see the following policy on the quality portal.

"Good practice policy and procedure guideline.”

Advice service policies and procedures should reflect relevant legislation and guidance relating to the type of service or issues that may arise whilst providing that service, for example, safeguarding adults or safeguarding children and young people.

How to develop policies and procedures

It is important and recommended that organisations develop their own policies and procedures to ensure that the policy reflects the way the organisation works. In some cases, there may also be a legal requirement to have certain policies in place.

A policy should be easily understood by everyone involved in the organisation and it should reflect the organisations own values and good practice ways of working.

In order for policies to operate successfully there should be commitment from the Board of Trustees or Management Committee, senior management and all other staff of the centre. This is inclusive of volunteers within your organisation, however, it some instances policies may need to be developed for volunteers use only as general policies may not be relevant, for example, staff annual appraisals, which may be work plan and target based as opposed to volunteer annual reviews which do not contain targeting requirements.

A written document is a good starting point as it will promote understanding of the policy. A policy that contains procedures will be a useful reference point and guide if an issue arises for staff members. A procedure is a guide of what steps need to be taken to be compliant with your policy. A written document may also be of benefit for an organisation if users or funders require clarification of what policies and procedures you work to and why.

*“The overall goal for any policy or procedure document is for the design to be simple, consistent, and easy to use.”* (US Santa Cruz 1994)

Some good practice points for writing policies and procedures are listed below:

* Use clear, concise, simple language.
* Information that can be easily outdated (e.g. names) should not be included unless necessary.
* If used, acronyms should be explained and definitions should be included.
* Policies and procedures should be readily available.
* Policies should be developed with staff/service users in mind.
* Staff and service users should be involved in writing policies and procedures.
* Policies and procedures should be reviewed and updated (where applicable) annually.
* Updates should be date stamped and if applicable, passed by your Board of Trustees.

Steps for Writing Policies and Procedures

Through consultation with your board of trustees, staff members and volunteers, develop a structure within your organisation on what you wish the layout of your policies and procedures to be.

Once this is agreed create and save a template so that all your policies and procedures work off the same style and structure. This will ensure it is easier for the end user to understand and follow these.

The following steps may be beneficial as a starting point to policy writing:

1. Identify the purpose and the need to have the written policy and procedure.

The intention of the policy should be outline clearly. Consider the main needs of your policy to be:

* Standardisation, to ensure everyone follows the same guidelines;
* Protection for your organisation and its user groups; and
* Be an easy guide to follow when issues arise.
1. Agree the policy and procedure title.

The title identifies and references a specific policy you are implementing. Think about the following policy title questions:

* Is the title description is accurate enough to show the main contents of this policy;
* Is the title in user friendly language;
* Will its content be reflected in the title.
1. Define the policy introduction and statements that will reflect the organisation’s image.
* The policy statement should outline and define the way an organisation will conduct itself during general and/or special circumstances.
* The policy statement should also identify the go-to person for specific information regarding a particular issue.
1. Outline the procedures for the policies for your organisation.

The procedures should be current and demonstrate a step-by-step outline of activities that will affect the organisation now or in the future.

* The steps should be in a sequence to be followed each time by staff and volunteers to obtain the same desired results.
* The steps will give staff and volunteers a start and end point to allow the user to know when the results can be expected.
* The policies will outline what person or department will be responsible for handling which functions.
1. If necessary, add a glossary of user friendly terms.
* Terminology used may be confusing, it is important to explain these for clarity as staff and volunteers need to have a clear understanding of the policy;
* If needed, include reference information to clarify statements;
* Write in a tone that fits your organisation environment.
1. Get staff input and buy in, or if applicable do a trial run.
* Involve staff members and volunteers by asking for their input of the procedures before distribution. Sometimes the people that will be following policies and using procedures are left out of the loop.
* Staff members and volunteers can inform you what things worked or failed in the past.
* Staff members and volunteers buy in and are aware that this policy will make them more productive and protect them whilst performing their roles.
1. Finalise the policy and procedure document.
* Proofread document for errors or omissions.
* Check illustrations for clarity and format.
* Ask each team to review its section for accuracy.
* Add the date and note revision or final draft on the first page.
* Sign signature page.

Implementation by senior management

The final steps are to implement the new policy and procedure to all staff in your organisation

Where the board of trustees may hold the responsibility for ensuring their organisations have the appropriate policies, more often the organisation’s managers have the responsibility for the dissemination and implementation of policies to their staff and volunteers.

The following is a guideline on what should be considered when implementing your policy.

Think about how you will:

1. Communicate the new policy and procedure with your staff and volunteers;
2. Ensure the staff and volunteers have the ability to follow them;
3. Provide staff and volunteers with strategies to manage their own policy knowledge;
4. Equip staff with a skillset to deal with policy and procedure requirements, this may be done in the following ways:
* Interactive classroom style learning
* On the job mentoring
* Staff team meetings
* Resources (video, online content, email etc.)
* Staff network/intranet
* Internal & External training providers

What is expected of staff members and volunteers

All staff members and volunteers of the organisation are required to read and adhere to the organisations policies. It is advisable that a record receipt of policy delivery is kept to protect the organisation should a staff member not follow procedure or breaches a policy. Staff members and volunteers should be made aware that if they have any difficulties with any aspect of a policy or its procedures, they should contact their line manager for clarification as soon as possible.

Amending and reviewing your policy and procedure

It is important to have set review dates and version numbers clearly identified on all your organisational policies and procedures. This ensures that everyone in the organisation is clear on which is the most up to date policy and procedure in line with legislation updates and any changes that may have occurred within the organisation or its structures.

Senior management should have a clearly defined policy database. On reflection, this database can be controlled either alphabetically for a small organisation or depending on the number and quantity of policies and procedures an organisation may have; it may be more beneficial to control this by the policy review date. This will enable the organisation to keep on top of when their policies require updating and amending where it is deemed appropriate.

This database should include the following at a minimum:

* A list of all the organisational policies;
* The date it was created;
* Date is was passed by senior management or Board of Trustees;
* Date it was disseminated to staff;
* Date of internal guidance or training (if applicable);
* The date of any updates or amendments and version numbers;
* The date for the next full review.

APPROVAL

This policy and procedure development guide has been approved by the Board of Trustees/Management Committee of **[INSERT THE NAME OF CENTRE]** and authorised by:

(Insert Name) (Manager)

(Insert Name) (Chairperson)

(Insert Version No.) (V.X)

(Insert Review Date)

Appendix 1

TEMPLATE POLICY GUIDE

[INSERT LOGO] [INSERT NAME OF ORGANISATION]

1. Title

The policy title should be carefully selected so that it is simple and clearly conveys the policy’s content.

2. Introduction or purpose of the policy.

A concise of breakdown of the rationale for the policy, including reference to legislation if appropriate.

3. Detailed policy content individualised to meet your organisational need.

What is your policy saying and is it what your organisation does or will do.

1. Applicability - who the policy applies to

Name all levels within the organisation that the policy applies to

1. Procedural steps

Step by step guide on what to do

6. Definitions and related policies if required.

Do any other policies overlap or is there new terminology which needs to be explained

7. Implementation procedures and responsibilities.

Who is responsible for implementation and how will this happen.

8. Approval

Board of Trustee approval if applicable. Include the review date and Version number